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INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY STUDY
PERSONNEL SECURITY: AIR FORCE

1) Procedures and Timeframes

The Air Force's SBIs are conducted by the Defense Investigative Service (DIS), with the Air Force Security Clearance Office (AFSCO) serving as the centralized adjudicative authority for granting, denying or revoking clearance eligibility.

Clearances for access to SCI are scoped according to DCID 1/14 but without the personal interview. The Air Force will accept SBIs done by other agencies as long as they meet DCID 1/14 standards. Air Force SCI regs are in USAFINTEL 201-1 -- The Security, Use and Dissemination of Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI). (These were not provided. Information will be added, as needed, after NAPA receives it.)

It takes over six months to complete the SCI clearance process. Timeframes are: three months for DIS field work; 10 and 1/2 days for transfer from DIS to AFSCO; five weeks for adjudication in AFSCO; and three weeks to transfer from AFSCO to AFIA/INSB. The Air Force does grant clearances for emergency access to SCI. They do a personal interview before doing so. Time between granting emergency access and getting full clearance depends on when in the SBI process the emergency access was requested. Usually it's after the process is underway, so it isn't too long.

2) Impact of Security Process on Agency Selection Process

Between 1985 and 1987, approximately 20 applicants declined employment offers after the investigation had begun. The Air Force does not collect specific data on the reasons they declined, but staff believe the main reason was the length of time the security clearance took. The applicants found other employment.

3) Extent of Impact of Security Process on Lifestyle/Family Issues

No data collected.

4) Impact of Involuntary Separation on Agency Security

The Air Force indicated that they can reassign or detail people to positions not requiring a clearance rather than remove them. For military intelligence officers, anytime they are considering a 'for cause' discharge they must report on such factors as depth of access and damage assessment; this is prepared by the commander. If the risk of damage is potentially grave, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence must rule on the discharge.

Aggregate data on military removals for cause are prepared -- 307 in calendar year 1987 and just over that in 1986 -- but the

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security office was not aware of like data on civilians. Most military removals are for weight and drugs. Air Force staff member could not remember a civilian intelligence staff member who had been removed for cause in recent years.

5)   Views on the Polygraph Examination as a Security Tool

The polygraph is not part of the SCI eligibility clearance process unless the background investigation turns up something that really needs to be resolved this way. Air Force estimates less than 1/10 of 1 percent of intelligence staff are ever polygraphed.

6)   NAPA Staff Views

As with the other military intelligence agencies, it is the length of initial security processing that is most noted. Air Force also believes they lose some applicants because of related delays, but there is no firm data. Air Force comments implied that they were less likely to implement polygraph use than the other services, further highlighting how much discretion there is in developing information for SCI access eligibility.